IT'S ALL CONNECTED
ISSUE 288 JULY 2015
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FREE MAGAZINE

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New sounds of hope Music Rising
Searching for fairness in BC
Four keys for healthy aging
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Reference: Anti-Influenza virus activities of commercial oregano oils and their carriers. Journal of Applied Pharmaceutical Science 2012; 02(07) 214-18.

Vancouver Farmers' Markets

berry and tomato photos © James Boardman

20 years of farm to table goodness

For the last 20 years, Vancouver Farmers Markets have fed people and created community. We are a registered non-profit society that supports small farm production, nourishes community and connects neighbours. Founded in 1995, Vancouver Farmers Markets (VFM) has grown to become one of Canada's leading organizers of farmers markets, with nine weekly markets that support over 250 producers and host 450,000 shoppers per year.

When you shop at a Vancouver Farmers Market, you're not just buying fresh, delicious food directly from local producers; you're taking an active part in the local food revolution and helping to create a sustainable food system in Vancouver and BC. That means helping to feed people in our region, supporting the local economy and protecting our local environment and farmland for decades to come.

Along with providing us core funds, aka the "meat and potatoes" of our operations, the support of folks like yourself help us create thriving community spaces that serve as access points for healthy food, wellness education, neighbourhood arts and culture and social change.

How we've grown

Vancouver Farmers Markets started out as East Vancouver Farmers Market, which descended upon eight skeptical farmers in the parking lot of the Croatian Cultural Centre. They sold out within a couple of hours. Word travelled quickly and the second week there were twice as many farmers and 800-1200 people were attending on a weekly basis. The market ran for 11 weeks and generated almost $40,000 in sales.

Now in our 20th year, Vancouver Farmers Markets operate nine weekly markets and host 425,000 people annually. Our markets support 250 small BC producers and help keep over 6,000 acres of farmland in production. Each year, VFM contributes more than $15 million in direct and indirect benefits to the local and regional economy.

Here's how you can join the party

You don't turn 20 everyday and we plan to celebrate this season with a series of 20th Anniversary events, contests, limited edition merchandise and festivities. Enter our #VFM20 photo contest on Instagram for your chance to win $100 in Market Money! Take a walk down memory lane with Moments in History panels at the markets and follow our #tbt and Founding Vendor profiles on our Market News blog. Become a Market Member during our 20th Anniversary Membership Drive. Check out our exclusive 20th Anniversary Market Merch, including the limited edition tee, handmade in BC cedar Market Crate and Market Tote Bag. See www.eatlocal.org

CSA box program

Community Supported Agriculture, often shortened to CSA, is a prepaid subscription to a farm's produce for the season. Most CSAs give shareholders a weekly supply of veggies, herbs, fruits and sometimes even eggs and meat. You know it's fresh and you get to meet the farm and people who grew your food. The prepaid CSA arrangements also make it a source of financial security for the farmer. Some CSAs also incorporate farm workdays for shareholders. Pickup days vary by farm and some offer pickups at a VFM location. A subscription to a CSA makes a great gift. For a list of vendors, see http://eatlocal.org/csa-box-program/ Contact them directly for more information.

Make a donation

In 2015, 50% of funds raised go directly to the Farmers Market Nutrition Coupon Program, with the goal to bring more low-income families and seniors to the markets. Donations of $20 or more receive the benefits of VFM Membership. Support us in our mission to create and nurture a local, sustainable and vibrant marketplace for our community, environment, and economy. Donate at eatlocal.org

Source: Vancouver Farmers Markets, www.eatlocal.org
For a list of farmers markets throughout BC and Alberta, see:
www.bcfarmersmarket.org www.albertamarkets.com/markets

Feast of Fields

Experience the harvest, gourmet style
UBC Farm, Sunday Sept 13, 1-5pm

This four-hour wandering harvest festival is Farm Folk City Folk's (FFCF) annual fundraising event. With a wine glass and linen napkin in hand, you can taste the very best of BC from chefs, farmers, fishers, ranchers, food artisans, vintners, brewers, distillers and other beverage producers from across the province. Feast of Fields highlights the connections between farmer and chef, field and table, and farm folks and city folks. Feast of Fields is a gastronomic journey towards a sustainable, local food system. For tickets and other Feast of Fields locations, see www.farmfolkcityfolk.ca

photo © Alex Grichenko

2015 Farmers Market schedule

Main St Station
1100 Station Street,
Wednesdays, 2-6PM, to Oct 7.

Yaletown
1200 Mainland St,
Thursdays, 2-6PM, to Oct 29.

Trout Lake
Lakewood Drive and 13th Ave,
Saturdays, 9AM-2PM, to Oct 24.

West End
Comox Street,
Saturdays, 9AM-2PM, to Oct 25.

Kerrisdale
5500 East Boulevard,
Saturdays, 10AM-2PM, to Oct 10.

Kitsilano
Kitsilano Community Centre,
Larch Street,
Sundays, 10AM-2PM, to Oct 25.

Mt. Pleasant
2300 Guelph Street,
Sundays, 10AM-2PM, to Oct 11.

Winter Market
4601 Ontario Street,
Saturdays, 10AM-2PM, Nov to Apr.

Hastings Park
Winter Market at the PNE:
Hastings Skatepark,
Renfrew Street,
Sundays, 10AM-2PM, Nov to Apr.

The market is about more than shopping. Enjoy weekly activities like the children's area and face-painting as well as special events.

common ground

features

in every issue

Publisher & Senior Editor - Joseph Roberts
Managing Editor - Sonya Weir
Advertising Sales - Adam Sealey

Design & Production - www.perubluesky.ca

Contributors:
Smedley Butler, Alan Cassels, David Christopher, Don Davies, Brenda Davis, Anthony J. Hall, Reimar Kroecher, Bruce Mason, Mac McLaughlin, Vesanto Melina, Dr. Mercola, Gwen Randall-Young, Lorisa Schouela, David Suzuki

Contact Common Ground:
Head office 604-733-2215
Toll-free 1-800-365-8897 Fax: 604-733-4415

Advertising: Adam Sealey
adam@commonground.ca

Editorial: editor@commonground.ca
datebook@commonground.ca
classifieds@commonground.ca

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"The principle of the maximization of profits, frequently isolated from other considerations, reflects a misunderstanding of the very concept of the economy". – Pope Francis

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War is a racket

By Major General Smedley Butler (1881 - 1940)

Smedley Darlington Butler was a United States Marine Corps Major General, the highest rank authorized at that time, and at the time of his death the most decorated Marine in US history. During his 34-year career as a Marine, he participated in military actions in the Philippines, China, Central America and the Caribbean during the Banana Wars and France in World War I. Butler is well known for having later become an outspoken critic of US wars and their consequences, as well as exposing the Business Plot, a plan to overthrow the US government. By the end of his career, Butler had received 16 medals, five for heroism. He is one of 19 men to receive the Medal of Honor twice and the only Marine to be awarded the Brevet Medal and two Medals of Honor, all for separate actions.

War is a racket. It always has been.

It is possibly the oldest, easily the most profitable, surely the most vicious. It is the only one international in scope. It is the only one in which the profits are reckoned in dollars and the losses in lives.

A racket is best described, I believe, as something that is not what it seems to the majority of the people. Only a small "inside" group knows what it is about. It is conducted for the benefit of the very few, at the expense of the very many. Out of war, a few people make huge fortunes.

In the World War [I], a mere handful garnered the profits of the conflict. At least 21,000 new millionaires and billionaires were made in the United States during the World War. That many admitted their huge blood gains in their income tax returns. How many other war millionaires falsified their tax returns no one knows.

How many of these war millionaires shouldered a rifle? How many of them dug a trench? How many of them knew what it meant to go hungry in a rat-infested dug-out? How many of them spent sleepless, frightened nights, ducking shells and shrapnel and machine gun bullets? How many of them parried a bayonet thrust of an enemy? How many of them were wounded or killed in battle?

Out of war, nations acquire additional territory, if they are victorious. They just take it. This newly acquired territory promptly is exploited by the few – the self-same few who wrung dollars out of blood in the war. The general public shoulders the bill.

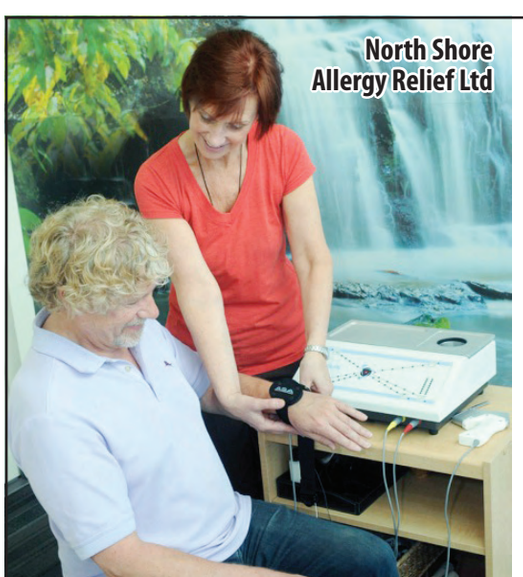
And what is this bill?

This bill renders a horrible accounting. Newly placed gravestones. Mangled bodies. Shattered minds. Broken hearts and homes. Economic instability. Depression and all its attendant miseries. Back-breaking taxation for generations and generations.

For a great many years, as a soldier, I had a suspicion that war was a racket; not until I retired to civil life did I fully realize it. Now that I see the international war clouds gathering, as they are today, I must face it and speak out.

Again, they are choosing sides. France and Russia met and agreed to stand side by side. Italy and Austria hurried to make a similar agreement. Poland and Germany cast sheep's eyes at each other, forgetting for the nonce [one unique occasion] their dispute over the Polish Corridor.

The assassination of King Alexander *continued p.31...*



The wrist sensor wth the testing and treatment computer.

by Bill Ridley

Only three years ago I was one of many seasonal allergy sufferers who would endure the daily routine of sneezing, itchy eyes, runny nose and fatigue. It came to the point that the over the counter medication just made me drowsy and the latest pharmaceutical "breakthrough" drug just cost me a lot of money without alleviating my symptoms.

It was at that time that I heard about a new technology that could reprogram my body's reaction to allergic substances so that I could finally be symptom free. If you have bad allergies I'm sure you can imagine, I was highly motivated to leave the neti pot and tissue boxes behind!

Discover Laser Allergy Relief

Since I had the treatment done in December 2010, my allergy symptoms miraculously disappeared and have yet to return! And the feedback I've received from clients is incredible.

Janette Toevs is allergic to mold, trees, weeds, cats and dogs, among other things. Her allergies used to leave her sneezing, coughing and exhausted. She felt like she was sick all the time. Several months ago, she tried Laser Allergy Relief.

"You get to a point where you've tried everything you could think of," she said. She'd tried over-the counter and prescription medicines, even home remedies! But Laser Allergy Relief worked for her. "I don't have the shortness of breath that I did," she said. "I don't have the congestion that I did and I just feel over all stronger."

Shannon Epp spent years trying to alleviate her hayfever with allergy shots that just didn't do the trick. She had itchy, watery eyes and couldn't stop sneezing.

"Everyone thinks you a have a cold all the time," she said. Then she tried Laser Allergy Relief this spring. "It actually brought up more things that I was allergic to than I thought it was," she said. "I feel better than I have in years."

Another patient, Chreanne McLean-Jacobs, struggled with allergies to the mold in her house – as well as sensitivities to cats, dogs and myriad other things. "My sinuses were always getting plugged up because we had mold in the house," she said. "There's still some mold here, there's still a cat downstairs but I've not had a problem with the allergies since the laser. I have not been sick in a year and a half now."

The old school medical model of using skin prick, scratch, scrap and patch tests to diagnose allergies is a rather invasive and archaic compared to the new high tech system employed by the North Shore's Laser Allergy Relief.

To determine what your allergies are, a form of bio-feedback is used whereby the electronic frequencies or signatures of various foods, plants or environmental samples are tested on the skin surface through a cuff worn on the arm. Eight sensors on the cuff record the skin's reaction to these substances and tabulate the results in a computer program. The computer can monitor literally hundreds of substances in a matter of seconds by determining if the skin is reacting in an inflammatory way.

Just as the diagnosis of allergies is computer quick, so is the treatment. By using a cold laser instrument focused on acupuncture points, corrective frequencies are reprogrammed into the body. These frequencies send the message to the cells that the former allergic food or plant or environmental substance is not harmful and therefore an allergic response like sneezing, watery eyes, runny nose are no longer necessary.

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- allergens: insects, pollen, dusts, molds, animal dander, environmental
- radiation (currently a big issue on our West Coast)
- electro magnetic frequency (EMF)

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Four keys to healthy aging

by Dr. Mercola

If you had a choice and could either age well – enjoying your "golden years" with energy and vigour, free from disability and illness – or age poorly and be straddled with health issues that keep you from fully living the later years of your life, which would you choose?

You do actually have a choice or, at least, can choose to use strategies that will greatly sway your chances in one direction or the other. And I'm sure most everyone reading this would rather experience healthy aging than the alternative.

Research has found four key behaviours that lower your risk of disability, chronic disease and mental health problems as you age: 1) Not smoking. 2) Moderate drinking. 3) Exercising regularly (at least 2.5 hours a week of moderate activity or 1 hour a week of vigorous activity). 4) Eating vegetables and fruits daily.

Now here's what's interesting. While each of these was moderately beneficial on its own, increasing the odds of "successful aging" by up to 50 percent, the best rewards came from following *all of them* simultaneously. Those who practised all four of these tripled their chances of avoiding disability and disease over a 16-year period and experienced good cognitive, mental, physical, respiratory and cardiovascular functioning. "Although individual healthy behaviours are moderately associated with successful aging, their combined impact is substantial," the researchers said.

Six additional healthy aging strategies

The bottom line is the more healthy habits you embrace, the higher your chances of aging successfully become. And while the strategies listed above are all important, there are several others I believe can benefit most people greatly as well.

1. Avoid sugar/fructose: Limiting sugar in your diet is a well-known key to longevity. Of all the molecules capable of inflicting damage in your body, sugar molecules are probably the most damaging. Fructose, in particular, is an extremely potent pro-inflammatory agent that creates toxic advanced glycation end products (AGEs), which are associated with the development of chronic degenerative diseases associated with aging.

Excess fructose consumption also promotes the kind of dangerous growth of fat cells around your vital organs that are the hallmark of diabetes and heart disease. In one study, 16 volunteers who ate high levels of fructose produced new fat cells around their heart, liver and other digestive organs in just 10 weeks.

Sugar/fructose also increases your insulin and leptin levels and decreases receptor sensitivity for both of these vital hormones and this is another *major* factor in premature aging and age-related chronic degenerative diseases such as heart disease and diabetes. Keep in mind that while it's perfectly normal for your blood sugar levels to rise slightly after every meal, it is *not* natural or healthy when your blood sugar levels become excessively elevated and stay that way.

Unfortunately, that's exactly what will happen if you're eating like the average American, who consumes a staggering 2.5 pounds of sugar a week on average. And when you add in other low-quality carb foods such as pastries, cookies, candy and starchy "complex carbs" such as bread and pasta, which also break down to sugar (glucose) in your body, it's not so difficult to see why so many Americans are in such poor health.

Further, according to professor Cynthia Kenyon, whom many experts believe should win the Nobel Prize for her research into aging, carbohydrates (glucose) directly affect the genes that govern youthfulness and longevity. So you may actually be able to extend your life and stay fit throughout your old age with a simple dietary change that switches on your "youth" gene.

Kenyon's research with C. elegans roundworms showed that decreased carb intake can lead to significant life extension and improved long-term health. One of the most interesting details of her findings is that not only did the roundworms live up to six times longer than normal, but they kept their health and youthful vigour until the end – and isn't that what "healthy aging" is really all about?

As a standard recommendation, I strongly advise keeping your total fructose consumption below 25 grams per day. However, most people would be wise to limit their fructose to 15 grams or less, particularly if you have elevated uric acid levels, which can be used as an indicator of fructose toxicity.

2. High intensity "anti-aging" exercise: Even if you're eating the healthiest diet in the world, you still need to exercise to reach the highest levels of health and you need to be exercising *effectively*, which means including high-intensity activities into your rotation. A study published in the journal *Mechanisms of Aging and Development* confirmed the "anti-aging" effect of high-intensity training, such as Peak Fitness. High-intensity interval-type training also gives a natural boost to your human growth hormone (HGH) production, which is essential for optimal health, strength and vigour.

3. Stress reduction and positive thinking: You cannot be optimally healthy if you avoid addressing the emotional component of your health and longevity, as your emotional state plays a role in nearly every physical disease – from heart disease and depression to arthritis and cancer. It's simply no coincidence that many centenarians mention positive thought and emotional wellness in their advice on how to stay healthy. As 114-year-old Walter Breuning said before his death, "Tell yourself that every day is a good day and make it that way."

> Effective coping mechanisms are a major longevity-promoting factor, in part because stress has a direct impact on inflammation, which in turn underlies many of the chronic diseases that kill people prematurely every day.

Effective coping mechanisms are a major longevity-promoting factor, in part because stress has a direct impact on inflammation which, in turn, underlies many of the chronic diseases that kill people prematurely every day. Meditation, prayer, social support and exercise are all viable options that can help you maintain emotional and mental equilibrium.

photo © Monkey Business Images

4. Take high-quality animal-based omega-3 fats: Animal-based omega-3 fat is a strong factor in helping people live longer and many experts believe it is likely the predominant reason why the Japanese are the longest lived race on the planet (as their diets are naturally high in omega-3s). In the US, many are deficient in omega-3 fats.

According to Dr. William Harris, an expert on omega-3 fats, those who have an omega-3 index of less than four percent age much faster than those with indexes above eight percent. Therefore, your omega-3 index may also be an effective marker of your rate of aging.

5. Optimize your vitamin D levels: In one study of more than 2,000 women, those with higher vitamin D levels were found to have fewer aging-related changes in their DNA, as well as lowered inflammatory responses. Additionally, people with low levels of vitamin D have been found more likely to have diabetes, high blood pressure and diseased heart muscle and are three times more likely to die [prematurely] from any cause compared to those with normal levels.

We have long known it is best to get your vitamin D from sun exposure and if at all possible, I strongly urge you to make sure you're getting out in the sun on a daily basis. If you can't get out in the sun, a safe tanning bed is the next best option. It is also important to make sure you get enough vitamin K2 to balance your vitamin D levels. The best way to get the vitamin K2 is from fermented vegetables that are created from special starter cultures that use bacteria that make vitamin K2.

6. Intermittent fasting: There's a growing body of research showing that fasting has a beneficial impact on longevity in animals. There are a number of mechanisms contributing to this effect. Normalizing insulin sensitivity is a major one as insulin sensitivity is critical for the activation of the mTOR pathway, which plays an important part in repairing and regenerating your tissues, including your muscles, thereby counteracting the aging process. The fact that it improves a number of potent disease markers indicates that fasting can have an overall beneficial effect on your general health. For example, modern science has confirmed fasting can help you: Normalize your insulin sensitivity, which is key for optimal health as insulin resistance (which is what you get when your insulin sensitivity plummets) is a primary contributing factor to nearly all chronic disease, from diabetes to heart disease and even cancer; normalize ghrelin levels, also known as "the hunger hormone"; promote human growth hormone (HGH) production, which plays an important part in health, fitness and slowing the aging process; lower triglyceride levels; reduce inflammation and lessen free radical damage.

On intermittent fasting, the longest time you'll ever abstain from food is 36 hours, although 14-18 hours is more common. You can also opt to simply *delay* eating, for example skipping breakfast, or stop eating earlier in the day. The issue of fasting is a major shift from my typical recommendations. I've not been a major advocate for it in the past, but… I am always learning. To that end, I've now revised my personal eating schedule to eliminate breakfast and restrict the time I eat food to a period of about six to seven hours each day, which is typically from noon to 6 or 7PM.

One caveat: the same genes that promote human longevity also appear to suppress female reproductive capacity. Hence, fasting and intense exercise protocols, both known to promote longevity, also lower estrogen levels, thereby modulating body composition in women and suppressing female reproductive capacity. So this may not be an ideal strategy for women of reproductive age who wish to have children.

Healthy aging is a "package deal"

There is no "quick fix" or magic bullet when it comes to aging well. Generally speaking, the better you treat your body throughout your life, the better your aging experience will be. Most people do not revel in the thought of getting older because for many "aging" is synonymous with aches and pains, forgetfulness and loneliness. It certainly is inevitable that you're going to get older, but I can tell you from personal experience that this does not have to be a bad thing.

Now, in my late 50s, I am the fittest I have ever been in my life and I also live out every day to its fullest potential. I may have been able to run faster when I was younger, but I would never trade that for the muscle strength, flexibility and knowledge that I have today. You too can achieve wellness on both physical and mental fronts and you can do so at any age. In fact, in many respects, life only continues to get better as the years go by.

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Where have all the guinea pigs gone?

How media disappears the bad news about HPV vaccines

Anyone who discusses vaccines needs to put their perspectives right up front. Here are mine: polarized positions and extreme views are not helpful. Burying inconvenient truths is not helpful. Nor is accusing people of being anti-vaxxers or pharma shills.

Yet I have found that polarized positions dominate mainstream media articles about controversial vaccines – sold as Gardasil and Cervarix – that are supposed to protect people from the Human Papilloma Virus (HPV). That's unfortunate because it prevents in-depth discussions of the benefits and harms related to the HPV vaccine.

There is one indisputable fact about the nine-year old HPV vaccine: we still have no proof it prevents cervical cancer as claimed. It might take 15 or 20 years to develop cervical cancer after being exposed to HPV so there is simply no body of evidence it has prevented a single case of cancer. Yet many reasonable, thoughtful people posing genuine questions about HPV vaccine safety are systematically shut down.

There seems to be a concerted effort to hide the bad news about the HPV vaccines. Despite numerous reports being gathered around the world of girls suffering autoimmune disorders and other adverse effects following inoculation, almost everywhere medical authorities deny the vaccine could hurt people – some irreversibly so.

For me, this is the headscratcher: can we really believe that the thousands of girls around the globe blaming the HPV vaccine for their inexplicable illnesses are doing so because they have a personal vendetta against the pharmaceutical industry?

Mainstream media is contributing in a very nefarious way: they are making the bad news disappear. Back in August of 2007, *Maclean's Magazine* printed a lengthy story on Gardasil titled "Our Girls Are Not Guinea Pigs" with the subtitle, "Is an upcoming mass inoculation of a generation unnecessary and potentially dangerous?" It was a provocative story at the time when Gardasil was still new and controversies swirled around its safety, how it was studied, approved and covered by governments. Today, you won't find that story on *Maclean's* website, or anywhere: Those "Guinea Pigs" have been disappeared.

Fast-forward to February of this year when the *Toronto Star*, Canada's largest newspaper, ran a front-page story on the HPV vaccine called "A Wonder Drug's Dark Side." It began with, "A *Star* investigation has found that since 2008, at least 60 Canadians have experienced debilitating illnesses after inoculation. Patients and parents say the incidents point to the importance of full disclosure of risks." The essence of this story was solid: girls were apparently being injured by a vaccine they were told would save them from cervical cancer.

A fierce counter-attack soon ensued. The *Star* was accused of being sensationalistic, anti-science and fear mongering. Complaints abounded, apologies were made and then astonishingly, the story was retracted. Disappeared from the Internet. If you search for it, you won't find it. Instead, you'll find a fawning opinion piece signed by about 60 physicians and infectious disease experts declaring the *Star's* "Dark Side" story was irresponsible because "study after study has shown there is no causal link between the events the *Star* reported and the vaccine."

The *Star* referred to 60 events related to the HPV vaccine, but is that the whole story? Sadly, finding out how many vaccine adverse events Canadians suffer from is difficult because Canada runs a dual reporting system. Most adverse events are held by the Public Health Agency of Canada, only accessible by access to information requests. (I'll write more about this in the future).

Looking south, up to May, 2015, the Vaccine Adverse Event Reporting (VAER)

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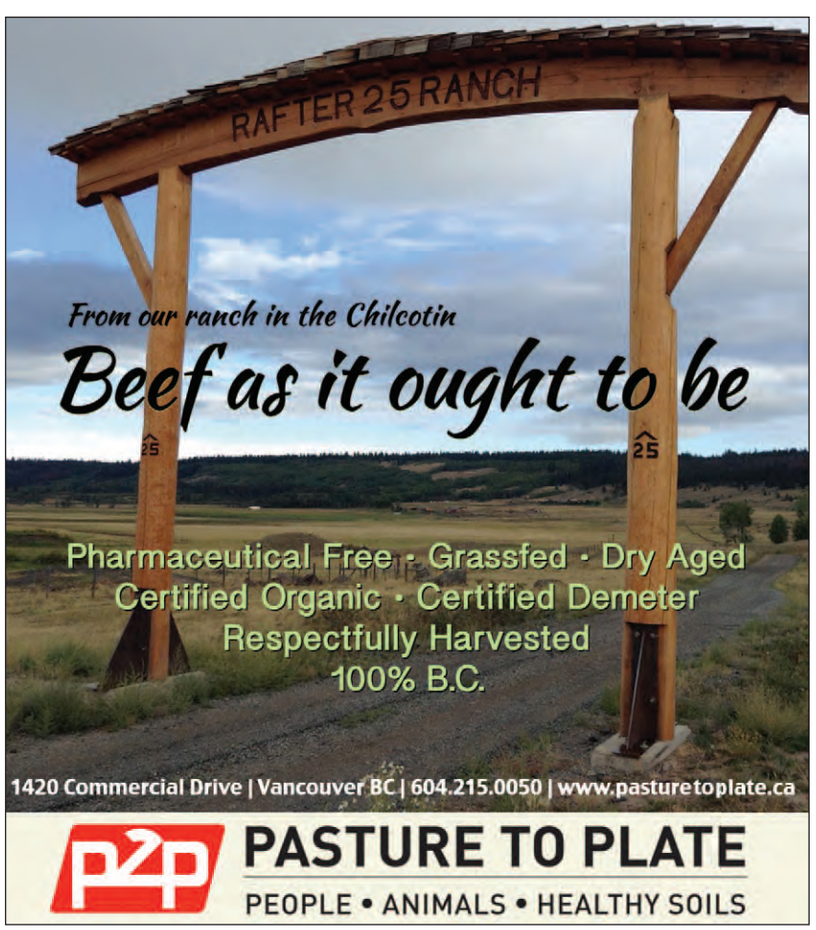
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system in the US has recorded 39,390 adverse events linked to the HPV vaccine and 228 deaths. Remember, these are 'associations,' not causation. The vaccine was a suspected cause in these adverse events, but given the nature of adverse event reporting, we can never be sure; one might say there might be up to 3,930 HPV vaccine-related adverse events in Canada.

Experts almost always call adverse events reports made to regulators 'anecdotal,' but does that mean we ignore them altogether? Last month, *La Revue Prescrire*, a French source of independent and critical drug information, published an extensive review of the HPV vaccine and concluded that, although there was no firm evidence of serious harm, regulators around the world have received reports of unexplained fatigue, muscle pain, tachycardia, irritability, confusion and amnesia, as well as more serious seizures, stroke and multiple sclerosis associated with, but probably not caused by, the HPV vaccine.

Can journalists write stories of real-live people and HPV vaccine injury without being accused of fear mongering or being anti-science? Apparently not, according to Toronto journalist Lawrence Solomon who claims there is a strict "media blackout" on vaccine safety stories, a fact he discovered when he tried to report on the measles vaccine. Unable to cast any doubt on the safety of vaccines, Mr. Solomon started his own website (www.vaccinefactcheck.org) and contends that discussing vaccine safety in the English speaking media is "basically taboo."

This situation was reflected too in my interviews with two women who live in Winlaw, BC. Edda West and Nelle Maxey are members of Vaccine Choice Canada (www.vaccinechoicecanada.com) and both are activists trying to promote vaccine safety. They come to the issue for deeply personal reasons. Edda's daughter had a severe vaccine reaction back in 1977 and Nelle's niece was injured by the DPT vaccine.

Having followed issues of vaccine safety for more than 30 years, Edda asserts, "We're real human beings who are trying to speak of our concerns and our voices are being silenced. We both have family members who have suffered harm from vaccines – we're mothers, grandmothers, we've lived through the gamut. I have never said I'm against vaccines. I want people to make an informed decision about vaccines."

"So," I asked them, "why is the mainstream media only giving one side of the HPV vaccine story?

Edda said, "Clearly, the media has been co-opted and paralyzed by 'consensus science.'" Nelle uses the term "perception management," referring to a concerted campaign to create the appearance there is no controversy over the HPV vaccine. She knows of many journalists around the globe who are being attacked and silenced for reporting on the experiences of those who have suffered vaccine-related injuries. She tells me she doesn't feel alone. "We have lots of vaccine allies," she says.

One of those allies is Freda Birell of Sanevax (www.sanevax.org), an organization devoted to producing quality information about the safety and effectiveness of vaccines. Their website has links to dozens of sites around the world, all united in the belief their daughters have been harmed by the HPV vaccine.

When I asked Freda why the media is so reluctant to report on the safety of the HPV vaccines she wrote back, "The media personnel I have talked to say one of two things: either the pharmaceutical companies threaten the media outlet with pulling their advertising or the health authorities contact them to 'inform' them that any press about vaccine risks will damage vaccine uptake and endanger the public health."

So I'm back to the same question: "Why is it so hard for the mainstream media to discuss – even if they are rare – problems related to the HPV vaccine?"

It's a rhetorical question I try to answer myself. With over 300 vaccines in development right now, the pharmaceutical industry and others who are invested – professionally and economically – in developing and marketing these products can't afford for the first "cancer vaccine" to fail. They've got too much riding on it. If the cancer vaccine paradigm – represented by the HPV vaccine – has problems, you have to do what you need to do, even if that means you keep burying the guinea pigs.

Alan Cassels is a drug policy researcher at the University of Victoria. You can read more of his writings at www.alancassels.com or follow him on twitter @akecassels

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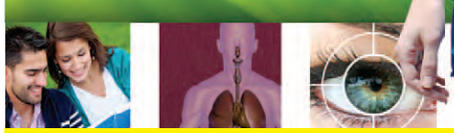

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Food labelling needs modernization

plant-based products currently face discrimination

Zengarry Vegetarian Cuisine's Brie-style cashew cheese. Zengarry was ordered by CFIA to change its business and product name so it did not include the protected word "cheese."

The Plant Foods Council, a national trade association promoting and protecting the interests of plant food manufacturers in Canada, is calling for changes to food regulations that discriminate against vegan products similar to traditional animal products such as meats, milks, cheeses and butters.

The Plant Foods Council is also seeking an end to the recent and disproportionate targeting of plant-based companies and manufacturers by the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA).

The CFIA recently targeted Zengarry Vegetarian Cuisine (www.zengarry.com), a small Ontario company specializing in artisanal dairy-free, cashew-based cheese. Zengarry clearly labels its products as "cashew cheese" and "dairy-free." Zengarry was ordered by CFIA to change its business and product name so it did not include the protected word "cheese," claiming that cheese must be made from animal milk and the term "cashew cheese" would mislead consumers.

Meanwhile, other protected words like "milk" and "butter" are commonly used on labels for peanut butter, almond butter and coconut milk without confusion. The CFIA has not attempted to enforce labelling regulations against such products for use of protected words and appears to be singling out Zengarry.

"Plant-based products like grain meats, vegan cheeses and soy milks have long been pervasive in the Canadian market place. Food labelling regulations that prohibit calling a product "cashew cheese" or "soy milk" are out of step with the way consumers think about and refer to these foods. Health Canada and the CFIA must take immediate steps to modernize labelling regulations to reflect this reality and end the discrimination against plant-based foods," says Camille Labchuk, a director of the Plant Foods Council.

This is not the first time a plant-based manufacturer has been singled out. In 2014, the CFIA forced Seattle-based Field Roast, which makes vegan grain meats, out of the Canadian marketplace. The company was required to reformulate its products to mimic the nutritional profile of animal meat, a long and expensive process.

The Plant Foods Council is asking Health Canada and the CFIA to amend regulations to:

- Recognize and regulate the term "vegan" as a descriptor of plant-based products.
- Allow the use of terms like "cheese," "milk" and "butter" to describe plant-based products.
- Remove the requirement that plant-based meats must have the same nutritional profile as animal meats.

Source: www.plantfoodscouncil.org The Plant Foods Council protects and promotes the interests of plant food manufacturers in Canada and educates the public about eating plant-based foods.

Rising concerns about gluten

Gluten is a protein composite found in wheat, spelt, kamut, rye, barley and triticale (a wheat-rye hybrid). Approximately one percent of the population suffers from celiac disease, a severe autoimmune response to gluten. For many years, people who believed they had adverse reactions to gluten were told gluten wasn't the cause if they tested negative on celiac tests. Celiac disease is a serious digestive disorder in which the body's immune system reacts to gluten and causes intestinal damage.

In 2011, a team of experts from the Center for Celiac Research at the University of Maryland School of Medicine released research suggesting that non-celiac gluten sensitivity is a distinct clinical entity, affecting six to seven percent of the population.

In wheat, kamut and spelt, the proteins that make up gluten are gliadin and glutenin. Other proteins that can injure those with celiac disease are secalin in rye and hordein in barley. Unless contaminated by gluten-containing grains, oats are safe for most with celiac disease, however, a small percentage are sensitive to avenin (a protein in oats) and must avoid oats. While uncontaminated oats are becoming available, the majority in North America are processed on machinery contaminated by other grains.

In celiac disease, there is inflammation and general damage along the small intestine, causing flattening of the villi (tiny hair-like appendages that line the small intestine) and a resultant failure to absorb essential nutrients. For those with gluten sensitivity, the effects are less severe, though they can fall along a spectrum of varying severity. As with celiac disease, symptoms may affect the gastrointestinal system (abdominal pain, cramping, bloating, diarrhea and constipation), overall behaviour (depression, foggy mind, ADHD-like behaviour and autism), iron deficiency anemia (fatigue, weakness, lack of concentration), joint pain, muscle disturbances, osteoporosis, leg numbness, migraines, sinus problems and a measureable immune response.

When asked about the surge in gluten-related conditions, lead investigator Dr. Alessio Fasano observed that although humans have eaten wheat for millennia, they lack enzymes that can completely digest gluten.

Those with severe sensitivity should completely avoid gluten. Others with mild sensitivity may tolerate the occasional gluten-containing food or one in which grains have been sprouted. Sprouting reduces gluten content without eliminating it.

Even if gluten isn't much of an issue, it's wise to include a variety of whole grains in your diet. This will maximize their benefits, as each type of grain offers a unique combination of nutrients, fibre and protective phytochemicals.

Brenda Davis and **Vesanto Melina** are BC-based dietitians and co-authors of the award winning **Becoming Vegan: Comprehensive Edition** (for health professionals and nutrition enthusiasts) and **Becoming Vegan: Express Edition**. www.nutrispeak.com, www.becomingvegan.ca, www.brendadavisrd.com

Whole grain guidelines

- Vary grain consumption and include pseudo-grains in the mix: amaranth, buckwheat, corn, Job's tears, millet, oats, quinoa, rice, sorghum, teff and wild rice.
- Choose intact whole grains over processed products and sprout them for added nutrition.
- If gluten sensitivity is a factor, use more squash, sweet potatoes, corn and starchy vegetables.
- Don't regularly add wheat bran to foods; it can interfere with mineral absorption.

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LETTERS

Understanding Harper's actions takes some mental acrobatics

Understanding the Harper government's foreign policies requires great mental flexibility. While Mr. Harper misses no opportunity to denounce Russia's land grab of the Crimean peninsula, he fully supports Israel's land grab in the Occupied Territories. Harper also proclaims it is absolutely illegal for Ukraine's eastern provinces to strive for separation from Ukraine and that Russia needs to be punished with stiff sanctions, conveniently forgetting that, in the 1990s, when the Serbian province of Kosovo was striving for separation from Serbia, NATO went on a bombing campaign to assist Kosovo in gaining independence.

Along with other western leaders, Harper believes it is essential to prevent Iran from developing nuclear weapons, yet when Mr. Obama threatened, "All options are on the table," including attacking Iran, there was no word of dissent from Mr. Harper. So it's OK for countries that have nuclear weapons to attack other countries for wanting to develop them. What is more, the nuclear countries signed a nonproliferation treaty, obliging them to dismantle their nuclear weapons. They did not follow through on this agreement. Instead, they modernized their nuclear weapons, making them even more lethal. The double standard is breath-taking.

Harper wants to protect us from Isis terrorists who are decapitating their enemies. In his view, they are a great threat to us so he has sent the Canadian Air Force to bomb Isis targets in Iraq and Syria. The fact is that of the few so-called terrorist acts planned in Canada, none have been linked to Isis. They were all planned by home-grown, disillusioned psycho cases on the margin of society. Nonetheless, Harper sent in the air force to bomb away!

Harper is shocked, and rightly so, by the brutality of Isis in its campaign to capture territory in Iraq and Syria. Our corporate media does a good job keeping this brutality front and centre in the public eye. Yet Harper seems undisturbed by the brutality of drone attacks, air force bombardments and the high civilian casualty rates – brutalities that our corporate media does an excellent job at keeping *out* of the public eye. Further, our staunch ally, Saudi Arabia, publicly decapitates and/or stones to death some 90 people each year. Of course, our corporate media does not bring us that news.

Harper publicly states he is baffled why young Canadians want to join Isis forces. Could it be these young people want to boot out foreign military bases? (How would we like it if Iraq had military bases in our backyard?) Could it be they are fed up with drone attacks and resent that Iraq's oil, which Iraq nationalized during the 1970s, is once again controlled by the big multinationals? Could it be they resent the sweetheart deals Iraq's oil industry was forced to sign while under foreign military occupation? Might they be fed up with puppet governments kept in power by foreign money and foreign intervention?

If there is one common theme in Harper's foreign policy, it is that right or wrong, fair or unfair, peaceful or violent, if it is lucrative and/or gains votes, it becomes Harper policy.

– Reimar Kroecher, North Vancouver

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NEWSBITES

WHO classifies glyphosate as "probably carcinogenic to humans"

The world's most widely used pesticide, glyphosate (commonly sold as Roundup), has been under the microscope lately. The International Agency for Research on Cancer of the World Health Organization released a report in March classifying it as "probably carcinogenic to humans." Not surprisingly, the manufacturer, Monsanto, contests the finding. Findings from the two-page summary of the IARC's study on glyphosate and four other organophosphates were published in the *Lancet* and can be found on the IARC's website at www.iarc.fr/

Here in Canada, the Canadian Biotechnology Action Network (CBAN) released its own report shining a light on "Where in the world" biotech crops are sown as part of its 2015 Inquiry into GE crops, 20 years since the Canadian government approved the first genetically modified crops in our country. Since "roundup ready" crops dominate the global acreage of genetically engineered crops, the CBAN report helps to highlight the scope and locus of the problem.

More information on glyphosate can be found on the Pesticide Action Network's website, www.panna.org, which also has a handy online, mobile app to check the pesticide load and implications for the food you may be eating.

Federal government should invest $1 billion in children's nutrition

The Coalition for Healthy School Food, made up of more than 20 organizations across Canada, is asking the federal government to invest one billion dollars in a Universal Healthy School Food Program to ensure all students can eat healthy food at school everyday.

About one-quarter of children's calories are from food products not recommended in *Canada's Food Guide* and only about one-third of children eat five or more servings of vegetables and fruit daily. "The federal government should invest in a universal school food program to ensure that children establish healthy eating habits that will last a lifetime," says Diana Bronson, executive director of Food Secure Canada (FSC). "We shall be looking at the platforms of all political parties in the upcoming election to ensure that a minimum of $250 million is earmarked for the program in their first year in office, to be gradually scaled up to a billion dollars."

Investing in a universal school food program would eventually reduce the financial burden on our healthcare system by reducing risks of diet-related chronic diseases and mental illness.

Investing in a universal school food program would eventually reduce the financial burden on our healthcare system by reducing risks of diet-related chronic diseases and mental illness. "Canada is one of the only industrialized countries that does not invest in its children this way and it's time they stepped up to the plate," according to Bronson.

A growing body of research demonstrates the potential of school food programs to improve food choices, support academic achievement for all students as well as contribute to students' physical and mental health. "Almost 90 per cent of the schools In Newfoundland and Labrador have a Kids Eat Smart Breakfast Club that provides healthy and nutritious food in an inclusive environment… All children in Canada should receive the same opportunity," says Celina Stoyles, executive director of Kids Eat Smart Foundation Newfoundland and Labrador.

Source: Food Secure Canada. *FSC is a pan-Canadian alliance of organizations and individuals working together to advance food security and food sovereignty through three inter-locking goals: zero hunger, healthy and safe food and sustainable food systems.* ***www.foodsecurecanada.org***

Hope and happiness

Reading the news, it's hard not to feel a growing sense of unease. The threat of terrorism, growing instability and conflict overseas, a shooting on Parliament Hill last October and uncertainty about the economy diminish our collective feelings of safety and security. To this, we add the looming environmental threats of climate change, pollution, declining ocean health, oil spills and extreme weather.

All of it takes a psychological toll even when we're not directly affected. Studies show that when we feel threatened, we isolate ourselves and focus on restoring our sense of security. Many people attempt to alleviate anxiety by grasping for wealth, seeking pleasure and taking solace in achievement or status. But this strategy backfires. Instead of bolstering our sense of security and well being, it diminishes it.

Across cultures and regardless of age and gender, people whose values centre on social position and accumulation of money and possessions actually face a greater risk of unhappiness, including anxiety, depression and low self-esteem. In his book, *The High Price of Materialism*, psychology professor Tim Kasser shows how materialistic values undermine well being, perpetuate feelings of insecurity and weaken the ties that bind us as human beings.

People who are materialistic also tend to be less interested in ecological issues, have negative attitudes toward the environment and demonstrate fewer instances of sustainable behaviour. That's a tragedy for humanity and the rest of life on Earth.

Cross-cultural research in social science has identified a set of consistently occurring human values. Social psychologists refer to one cluster as "extrinsic" or materialistic. These are concerned with our desire for achievement, status, power and wealth. Opposite to those are "intrinsic" values. They relate to caring, community, environmental concern and social justice.

Although each of us carries both, the importance we attach to one set of values tends to diminish the importance of the other. When power values like social status, prestige and dominance come first, the universal values of tolerance, appreciation and concern for the welfare of others are suppressed.

The UK-based Common Cause Foundation is synthesizing this growing body of values research. It offers guidance to social change organizations on ways to engage cultural values to further their causes. Because values are like muscles – they get stronger the more we exercise them – activists can consciously stimulate intrinsic values in communications and campaigns.

When we feel threatened, we isolate ourselves and focus on restoring our sense of security.

Researchers have also discovered what they call the values "bleed-over effect." Because values tend to exist in clusters, when one is activated, so are compatible neighbouring values. For example, people reminded of generosity, self-direction and family are more likely to support pro-environmental policies than those reminded of financial success and status.

The forces behind planetary crises are complex. History, politics and economics influence how humans act. Social change requires a focus on individual behaviour, corporate responsibility and government policy. In today's unstable political environment, values must also be part of the equation.

As Canadians, let's be conscious of where we direct our light.

Written with contributions from David Suzuki Foundation senior public engagement specialist Aryne Sheppard. Learn more at www.davidsuzuki.org

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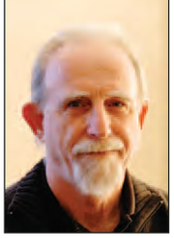

Mac McLaughlin

StarWise

July 2015

WE CAN EXPECT a very hot July and I'm not talking about the weather. Actually, it's the astrological weather that will cause the heat to rise all the way around. Fiery Mars throws his hat into the ring and he always creates a disturbance or ruckus of some sort. The Canada Day full Moon is potent, hopefully for the good. We know that a full Moon carries high energy as we witness people coming unglued; it's tricky enough to navigate a full Moon without losing our cool, but when Mars gets involved, it acts like a high octane fuel where only a minor spark is needed to set off a bonfire of emotions and knee-jerk reactions.

"What to do?" you ask. Forewarned is forearmed. We always have choices and we can choose to step aside and let the testosterone junkies have their way. We know someday they will pay, but today, just let them go by. If we react to their rudeness, we get sucked into the drama and people's lives may be at stake. Is it worth it? The whole month has a testy buzz and edge to it and it will take our best behaviour to get through unscathed. The new Moon on July 15 carries its own potency in the sense that Mercury and Mars are opposite to Pluto. The combination tells of aggression, manipulation and control. The creepy crawlers with an agenda to carry out their malignant forms of violence will dominate the headlines. Fires, accidents and incidents will be notable.

Here's another take on the astro dance. Venus and Saturn are in square aspect throughout the month and instead of looking out for the bad guys and bad incidents, we could find ourselves simmering away with some form of resentment or discontent with our near and dear. I'm sure the divorce lawyers will be licking their chops after the smoke clears and the summer antics are revealed. Now that I have you totally depressed, we can throw in the very positive and counterbalancing Venus/Jupiter conjunction that will also be in play throughout the month. It's probable we will work though all sorts of concerns as we unravel the complicated double knots we have tied ourselves with over myriad lifetimes of karmic exchange and indebtedness. Imagine you can work though your difficulties and come out of it closer, tighter and more loving than ever before. As Shakespeare said, "The fault, dear Brutus, is not our stars, but in ourselves, that we are underlings." It's up to us to make conscious choices.

Mac McLaughlin has been a practising, professional astrologer for more than four decades. His popular **Straight Stars** column ran in Vancouver's largest weekly newspaper for 11 years. Email mac@macsstars.com or call 604-731-1109.

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ARIES Mar 21 - Apr 19

Read the introduction regarding your ruling planet Mars being involved with the July lunation cycles. When planets are moving through Cancer, they form a square aspect to your Aries planets creating tension and awareness. This may not be a bad thing; if anything, there are all kinds of opportunities for you to resolve ongoing disputes and concerns.

TAURUS Apr 20 - May 21

Now is the time to sort out what works or doesn't work, what stays and what has to go. You have a strong sense of values and now you will be keenly aware of making the difference that brings contentment. Communication and exchange, visits, journeys and an all-round busy time make the month fly by.

GEMINI May 22 - Jun 20

Health, home, family and friends are topics that dominate the scene for the twins this month. It's all about values – what you value and what is most important to you. Some choices will have to be made as you find ways to economize and streamline wherever necessary. It's a time of hellos and goodbyes.

CANCER Jun 21 - Jul 22

This month is loaded for bear. Although sounding a tad ominous, it may not be that way, but the potential for high gear activity and movement is strong. Cancer folks are relentless when they want something and will work very hard in order to attain their objectives. Well, gird your loins and get at it.

LEO Jul 23 - Aug 22

Venus and Jupiter cast their benevolent and uplifting energies into your sign. Make sure you know what you truly want for you may get it. There is the likelihood of going overboard as well and taking on way too much. Some situations or relationships may end and you may very well walk away.

VIRGO Aug 23 - Sep 22

October's going to be hot. Wait a minute; the astute Virgo's dynamic sense of discrimination and observation knows that Mac should be writing about July. Sorry, I got excited when my eye caught a glimpse of the October skies. July looks very good as well although it is time to sort and sift through what makes you happy or not.

LIBRA Sep 23 - Oct 22

Career objectives are the big focus. You might want to get a move on and make a decision as to what you truly want to do. Work your magic and charms as July offers great opportunities to mix and mingle. You can win the trust and admiration of others easily now.

SCORPIO Oct 23 - Nov 21

There's a two-pronged energy prevailing now. It's a time of laughter and tears, joys and fears, great memories and regrets. My hint is to embrace it all. Give your love and devotion to those that matter and say goodbye to those leaving your inner circle. Travel is highlighted, spirituality as well.

SAGITTARIUS Nov 22 - Dec 21

The Scorpio paragraph fits in a way, as this is a time of expansion and contraction. You will move forward and meet some success in some areas and will have to acquiesce and bow out in other areas. Money and abundance may come, but at a price, for as we know, nothing is for free.

CAPRICORN Dec 22 - Jan 19

Very intense energy is onboard throughout the month and it will take some manoeuvring to sort it all out and get though safely. Keep in mind that a soft reply turns away wrath, while the cut from a sword will heal in time, but a cut from the tongue can fester for a long time.

AQUARIUS Jan 20 - Feb 19

The sands of time continually shift and we can hardly recognize the landscape of the past. We're here to sort through what we have created in our past lives and now the opportunities are on-board to do exactly that. Before you dive for cover, know that it may be about love and lots of it.

PISCES Feb 20 - Mar 20

Your solar fifth house of romance, entertainment and children is lit up like a Christmas tree. There's nothing like the love we have for our children that melts our hearts. Creative energies are very high and you should make good use of the times. You're at your best when giving, serving and loving.

Be yourself

And the day came when the risk it took to remain tight in a bud was more painful than the risk it took to blossom. – Anaïs Nin

Worrying about what others think about us can be like a cancer that spreads through one's consciousness. It takes away peace of mind and eats away at self-esteem. Every living thing begins as some sort of seed, within which is held its potential. The purpose of that seed is to grow into the fullness of its being.

We all start out that way. Think of a baby exploring the world. He is inside himself, looking out. He has no sense of how others view him. He is curious and delights in all that is around him. He loves to laugh. There is simply no self-consciousness. He lives in the moment.

Some adults live this way, but they are generally considered eccentrics! They are also great fun to be around. However, more often than not, that blossoming being begins to reshape itself in order to win approval. For a young child, a parent's disapproval can feel like a withdrawal of love. Approval becomes equated with love.

This can be reinforced in school where the right answer can be valued more than creative thinking. For teens, this need for approval can become a constant source of insecurity. It is a tentative time for many teens as they begin to experience their own individuality, but there is huge pressure to conform. Taken to extremes, this can manifest as eating disorders, drug use or early sexual activity in a desperate attempt to fit in.

Sadly, this over-concern about how others view us can continue into adulthood. Sometimes, a person does not value himself and projects this devaluation onto others. They become super vigilant, always looking for clues that others do not like them. Often, there is absolutely no basis in reality, as others don't really spend that much time thinking about them.

After assuming that someone has a negative opinion of them, the person then becomes angry and bitter towards that person. They are upset about what they *think* the other thinks of them. Thus, they fall into a negative spiral of low self-esteem, made worse by imagining the negative opinions of others.

Ironically, an individual who is very judgemental of others assumes others are just as judgmental. What makes it all the more difficult is that they truly believe their perceptions and are usually not open to hearing it is probably not as they think it is. Disagree with their perceptions and you join the group that is not in support of them.

When we are giving from the heart, there is no room for negativity towards others, or ourselves.

Often, a partner learns to just keep quiet or to agree with their partner's negative thoughts so as to keep the peace, but this only serves to reinforce the other's insecure perceptions.

The cure, if there is one, is to practise stopping these thoughts and not allowing the mind to go down the road of worrying about what others think. It is also to begin to develop inner strength and to stop criticizing ourselves.

Like the little child, it is best to focus on the world outside, to find things to enjoy and think about being a positive person. Focus on bringing good energy into your life and the lives of others. When we are giving from the heart, there is no room for negativity towards others, or ourselves.

Gwen Randall-Young is an author and psychotherapist in private practice. For articles and information about her books, "Deep Powerful Change" hypnosis CDs and "Creating Effective Relationships" series, visit www.gwen.ca

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by Bruce Mason

Clean tech: God bless the Pope

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A global chorus now has a conductor with impeccable timing and sense of harmony, a man who connects all the dots while just getting warmed up. Of the 300 formal teachings on Catholic doctrine over 275 years, Pope Francis' *Laudato Si: On the Care of Our Common Home* is like music; it's universal.

The Pope's uncompromising indictment of the global market economy – accusing it of plundering the Earth at the expense of the poor and future generations – will profoundly change, or at least shape, history. It is an explosive, unprecedented analysis that will inform and inspire action on climate change, poverty and inequality for years to come.

In less than 200 pages, Pope Francis makes about 250 points. Anyone who has read this far will get it; our ecological crisis is essentially a spiritual problem.

The manslaughter of our planet is our defining existential challenge. And our collective failure to commit to meaningful reductions is a political and moral travesty and catastrophe, particularly for the poorest and most marginalized.

This, says Pope Francis, is a human crisis. The solution is not simply to eliminate fossil fuels or rethink carbon credits. It is to rediscover what it means to be human, what he calls "integral ecology," including a rejection of the cults of economic growth, material accumulation and the irrational myth of unlimited progress.

"The violence present in our hearts, wounded by sin, is also reflected in the symptoms of sickness evident in the soil, in the water, in the air and in all forms of life," he writes. "The ecological crisis is also a summons to profound interior conversion."

His intention is to provoke unprecedented action – to fundamentally convert how humans understand their place and responsibility to our imperilled planet. "Everything is connected" is a constant refrain, and fair and just management of the "global commons," a common theme.

It is the right message at the right time from the right person making the clearest and loudest moral case ever. This is a leader who makes us want to be better people. Don't forget he brokered normalization of US-Cuba relations and brought Israel and Palestine leaders together in the same room. He is now pushing hard for climate-conscious polices on a scale that countries and organizations have not yet achieved.

He is admired, respected and even loved by more than 1.2 billion Catholics. And we're fascinated by him and by his ability to communicate through simple language and behaviour. He also has street creds; he is the world's most influential tweeter – re-tweeted more than Barack Obama, even Justin Bieber. Unprecedented global interest in his long-awaited encyclical crashed the Vatican website and generated hundreds of headlines and commentaries in dozens of languages. It is accessible, masterful, and in places, beautiful.

His carefully timed intervention is much more than a passing distraction from business as usual. In September, the first pope from the Southern hemisphere will also be the first to address the joint Congress and Senate in Washington – the lion's den – as well as the UN.

He has already addressed "everyone living on the planet," amid the ongoing success of fossil fuel divestment, and in concert with the Oslo Principles on Global Climate Change Obligation -which argued that governments are in flagrant breach of legal obligations to the planet. This was a few days before a Dutch court ordered the state to reduce emissions by 25% within five years; it was the first climate liability court case. Norway and Belgium are following suit. In Canada, more than five million people have signed the Blue Dot declaration to recognize their right to a healthy environment.

Counting down to make-or-break talks in Paris in December at the UN Climate Change Conference, leaders are now looking over their shoulders not only at the Pope; they're also looking for legal challenges to inadequate emissions-cutting pledges.

UN Climate Change Secretariat Christiana Figueres – charged with making an international climate deal – says, "Transformation is on its way, irreversible, picking up speed. The encyclical will have a major impact on the moral imperative of addressing climate change to protect the most vulnerable."

The climate, the atmosphere, oceans and forests are "global commons," the Pope insists, belonging to all – not a "no man's land" of raw material, governed only by the law of the jungle and survival of the greediest.

Short-term-minded governments and enterprises won't save us, he warns, switching global attention away from macro solutions by policy summits to personal ethics of environmental stewardship. The infuriating impasse of more than two decades of squandered international negotiations has created an appearance of inevitability. Our life-and-death crisis is exacerbated by an obsession with GDP, which doesn't record the degradation of Earth or the abject inequities between and within countries. Truly comprehensive cost-benefit analysis must give planetary wellbeing as much standing as it gives the bottom line and place global common good above national interests, Pope Francis advises.

The global market for clean tech – $1 trillion in 2010 – is projected to grow to $3 trillion by 2020, behind only energy (oil and gas) and arms sales. But the IMF estimates that when impacts of climate change are factored in, fossil fuel companies receive $14.5 billion in subsidies every day ($5.3 trillion in 2015). Without this obscene handout, they can no longer compete with clean energy technology.

"Revolutionary" and "radical" is the Pope's clarion call for extraordinary change in human vision and behaviour and for sacrifice, especially from the rich and powerful who owe an "ecological debt." "Remarkable" is his emphasis on the force of love – not fear – to motivate us.

Linking poverty, economics and ecological destruction, the Pope calls on the world to deliver common good. Poverty and ecological crises don't just exist, they are *caused,* he says, casting blame on transnational corporations, criticizing the foreign debt system as control of the poor.

Without public pressure, there will be no progress in a transition to clean energy, the Pope warns. To "protect our common home," we must actively confront fossil fuels economics and take bold action to scale solutions to climate change.

The climate, the atmosphere, oceans and forests are "global commons," the Pope insists, belonging to all – not a "no man's land" of raw material, governed only by the law of the jungle and survival of the greediest.

Here at home, Analytica Advisors' just released 2015 Canadian Clean Technology Industry Report notes that, despite impressive growth in revenue and employment – four times the rate of the overall national economy – our fastest growing industry lost 41% of its global share of clean technology in a decade, the biggest loser of market share among the top 24 exporting countries.

We are wasting opportunity and we have no government policy, strategy, integrated approach, government ministry or even a debate.

Céline Bak, president of Analytica Advisors, told *Common Ground*: "This encyclical makes our overdue debate more likely, grounded in both evidence and humanity, democratic, science-based, informed by values which Canadians hold dear. And it affirms the need to consider our part in contributing solutions and helping others face climate change."

Bruce Mason is a Vancouver and Gabriola-Island based five-string banjo player, gardener, freelance writer and author of **Our Clinic**. brucemason@shaw.ca

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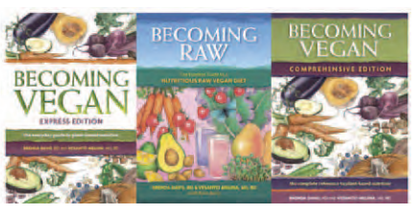

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INDEPENDENT MEDIA David Christopher

MEDIA

Push needed for wireless reform

Canadians pay some of the highest prices for cell phone service in the industrialized world.

Confirmation of this recently arrived in the form of the *2015 Wall Report*, an official price comparison analysis jointly commissioned by the Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission (CRTC) and Industry Canada.

The report was bad news all-round for long suffering Canadian telecom users. Key findings include:

1. Wireless prices are increasing across the board, with the cost of a standard 1GB monthly cell phone plan increasing by 7%, over three times the rate of inflation, which is 2.3%.

2. New entrants, like Wind Mobile, are offering rates up to 50% cheaper than the Big Three incumbents (Bell, Rogers, Telus). Sadly, however, the Big Three is still blocking Canadians from accessing these more affordable alternatives.

3. For moderate-to-high usage plans, average Canadian prices remain amongst the most expensive of the countries surveyed, placing Canada at the back of the pack.

4. Broadband prices, especially for speeds over 15 Mbps, "are at the high end of the group of surveyed countries" with a standard 16-40 Mbps service costing a whopping 64% more in Canada than in the UK.

Canada is going backwards when it comes to getting a grip on spiralling telecom prices. These sky-high prices are not only unacceptable, but top business leaders have warned they are holding back our entire economy.

From Stephen Harper on down, the government has staked its reputation on reducing cell phone prices. Although Industry Minister James Moore has taken some positive steps forward, they have clearly been nowhere near enough to ensure Canadians finally get the lower prices and greater choice they deserve.

In previous years, the government went out of its way to herald the *Wall Report*, issuing press releases and cherry-picking statistics in an attempt to paint the numbers in the best possible light.

This year, the report was so unequivocally bad it looks like the government did its best to bury the news. Not a single release was issued and the government's communications strategy consisted entirely of a single tweet from the CRTC.

Of course, our OpenMedia team swung into action when the report was released, issuing a hard-hitting media release and reaching out to key journalists to alert them to the news. Incredibly, we heard from a number of top telecom journalists that the first they'd heard of the report was from our release, meaning the government failed to take even the most basic steps to publicize a report that, after all, costs a substantial amount of taxpayer dollars to produce.

Thankfully, the government was unable to completely bury the story – the report received solid coverage on CBC News and other outlets – and Canadians are now aware of just how badly the government's policies have failed.

It's clear the government's piecemeal approach to wireless reform is simply not working. We need a much more ambitious approach to dismantle Big Telecom's monopoly and create a level playing field for desperately needed independent providers.

With an election just around the corner, now is a great time for everyone to speak out and call for change.

Growing numbers of Canadians have had enough of paying ridiculous rates for a basic everyday service and are speaking out at unblockcanada.ca

David Christopher is Communications Manager for OpenMedia (openmedia.ca).

Nelson's co-op model thrives

Nelson photo © Mark Hryciw

Kootenay Lake at Nelson and a model of the Nelson Commons housing and commercial development (right).

In recent years, the concept of social enterprise has garnered growing attention among the progressive community, as if it were some newly discovered approach to business that could help redirect the delivery of goods and services while serving the common good. Turns out this old wine in new bottles has not only been around for some time, but it has been active in our midst.

On first thought, it might be a stretch to think of co-operatives as the original social enterprise, but it is not such a huge stretch if one looks at Western economic structures over the last 200 years. Of course, it would be negligent to not acknowledge that, for most of history, the principle of co-operation has been the cultural norm for many indigenous cultures. As capitalism gradually became the prevailing economic paradigm for Europe and then the "New World," self reliance and the law of comparative advantage – so-called "free trade" – steadily took hold. Having just harnessed the first fossil fuel (coal) and possessing seemingly unlimited natural resources, it was not surprising that people embraced this new economic model as a panacea for many woes that had plagued humanity for generations.

However, as we know, genies are never easily coaxed back into the bottle and earlier iterations of capitalism have morphed into the hyper capitalism we have today; it is hard to ignore the necessity for alternatives that can provide the goods and services we require without destroying the life systems upon which we depend. Hence, the surge in new social enterprises.

It is not surprising the Nelson Commons project would take root in a place like Nelson as a social enterprise.

Wikipedia defines a "social enterprise" as "an organization that applies commercial strategies to maximize improvements in human and environmental well-being, rather than maximizing profits for external shareholders."

This was clearly the case in 1844 when the Rochdale Society of Equitable Pioneers in Rochdale, England, created what is considered to be the first successful cooperative enterprise and it has since been used as a model for modern co-ops, following the seven Rochdale Principles that include:

Self-help: In co-operatives, people help each other whilst helping themselves by working together for mutual benefit.

Self-responsibility: Individuals within co-operatives act responsibly and play a full part in the organization.

Democracy: A co-operative will be structured so that members have control over the organization – one member, one vote.

Equality: Each member will have equal rights and benefits according to their contribution.

Equity: Members will be treated justly and fairly.

Solidarity: Members will support each other and other co-operatives.

Today, nearly 200 years later, here in BC we have many thriving co-operative enterprises. Two that stand out are Vancity and Mountain Equipment Co-op. MEC, as it is more commonly called – started in 1971 when a small group of west coast outdoor enthusiasts decided to create a retail business in a less conventional way and chose the co-op model. Forty-four years later – and with a membership of 3.3 million across Canada (10% of the population) – MEC stands out as an enterprise that provides exceptional products and service while providing generous support to a myriad of non-profits, particularly in the environmental realm.

And, of course, BC wouldn't be the same were it not for Vancity which, with its 58 branches, holds the status as Canada's largest community credit union. Vancity uses its $18.6 billion in assets to help improve the financial well-being of its members while, at the same time, helping to develop healthy communities that are socially, economically and environmentally sustainable. The range of support Vancity provides to all manner of progressive initiatives in our region is inspiring and exemplifies the benefits that can accrue when one focuses on the "commons."

Tucked away in the southeast corner of our province is Nelson, the "Queen City" of the Kootenays and a beehive of co-ops. The city even boasts a co-op of co-ops – the Upper Columbia Co-op Council – offering a place where ideas and strategies can be shared. Unknown to most, Nelson boasts Canada's largest member-owned natural foods co-operative with over 13,000 members. Bursting at the seams, the Kootenay Co-op had been looking for a new home for a number of years before securing a prime property in the heart of downtown that had been the home of a Super Valu come Extra Foods.

As a long time resident of the area, Russell Precious, who had grown Capers into an iconic Vancouver food destination in the 80s and 90s, teamed up with the Co-op to explore developing the site into a mixed-use project; it would include a new 20,000-square-foot co-op, 10,000 square feet of additional commercial space and 54 residential condominiums above.

In the process of determining the feasibility of the project, Russell's long- time friend Keith Jardine introduced him to Andy Broderick, the VP of Community Investment at Vancity. The two of them struck it off and initiated a partnership that exemplifies the Rochdale Principle: "solidarity" or co-ops helping co-ops.

"When I was first approached, I thought it was a bit unusual and certainly audacious for a relatively small food co-op to initiate a project of this scale; perhaps that's what got my attention" Andy recalls. "The Kootenay Co-op has done their homework and have brought together a recognized group of professionals to pull this off and this can serve as a prototype for other co-ops to think bigger." After nearly four *continued p.25…*

by Lorisa Schouela

The evolution of an activist

One day last July, my life took a decisive turn. The day began much like any other summer Sunday; I ate breakfast and headed to the Kitsilano farmer's market hauling a bucket of compost.

At the entrance to the market, an organizer for Dogwood Initiative, a local grassroots organization, approached me with a petition against the expansion of coal transport through the Fraser-Surrey Docks.

Signing the petition was easy enough, but when the Dogwood representative asked if I would actively get involved in the coal campaign, I pulled back. Did I really want to be invaded with an avalanche of emails and phone calls? I have always regarded my privacy as sacrosanct.

"Yes," I said, surprising myself, but I honestly didn't think I'd ever hear from her again. A couple of weeks later when I met the young woman from Dogwood, I felt excited and nervous – excited at the opportunity to get involved but nervous because this was way out of my comfort zone.

Becoming more aware has been a gradual process, an evolution in the way I think and act in the world. The first tentative steps involved making certain key choices: becoming a more aware consumer, supporting a credit union rather than a conventional bank, eating organic and vegetarian, using transit whenever possible and recycling. For a while, that felt good enough.

As time progressed, I saw the desecration of the environment accelerate at a breathtaking rate: carbon emissions ballooned, natural habitats vanished, many fish and wildlife species disappeared, plans to extend pipelines from coast to coast continued unabated, tanker traffic multiplied and environmental legislation was gutted. It was becoming evident our government's strategy was one of putting commercial profits before people.

Watching helplessly from the sidelines became unbearable. As a lover of the Earth, animals and children and as a mother and grandmother, I felt a deep urgency to protect what I love.

I became active in Dogwood's coal initiative to stop the proposed export of eight million metric tons of US thermal coal per year, which would travel by rail to the Fraser-Surrey Docks terminal at which point it would be transferred to gigantic ocean barges bound for Asian markets.

The current proposal to ship massive amounts of coal from Fraser-Surrey Docks down the Fraser River, through the Straits of Georgia and past the Gulf Islands to be burned in Asia would not only compromise the air, crops, waterways and fisheries at home, but it would also accelerate the global climate crisis as the atmospheric impact of burning coal is the same no matter where it's burned.

The scheme to massively scale-up exports of fossil fuels has met with fierce opposition from communities on both sides of the border that are directly affected by the noise and pollution of the coal trains. A cross-border movement has emerged as people see themselves not as separated by a border, but as a West Coast bloc mobilizing to protect the same land and waterway.

As the battle to protect our air, land and water heats up, alliances are being forged between Native and non-Native groups, as both sides discover the potential benefits of working together in a common cause.

The "divide and rule" strategy no longer works. Outraged at having no say in projects that affect their health, safety and environment, young and old, native and non native, Americans and Canadians, are uniting. There is a new fighting spirit at play and it seems to be spreading with each advancing challenge.

My hope is that more people will awaken to the urgency of mobilizing as an organized and united force to say "No" to coal trains, to poisons polluting our air, land and water and to the expansion of fossil fuel frontiers.

My hope is that more people will awaken to the urgency of mobilizing as an organized and united force to say "No" to coal trains, to poisons polluting our air, land and water and to the expansion of fossil fuel frontiers.

If you've been sitting helplessly on the sidelines and want to exercise your right to say "No," there are many local grassroots organizations you can contact such as dogwoodinitiative.org, Leadnow.ca or fairvotingbc.ca for people-powered change.

Lorisa Schouela is interested in providing educational opportunities to under-served populations. She is currently involved in a Rose Charity educational project in Uganda. Lorisa offers end-of-life care as a volunteer at Granville Hospice.

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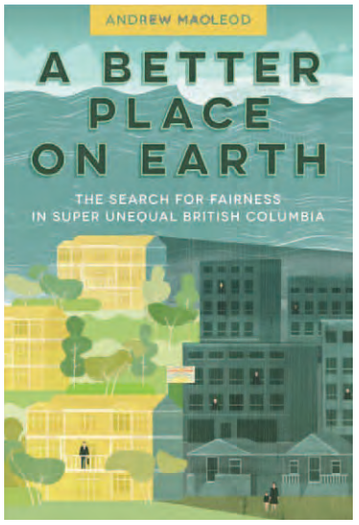

Have you heard that BC has earned yet another top spot on a list? No, not most "liveable," "boring," "expensive" or "unhappy." Turns out the province is the most "unequal" in Canada. Here are a few numbers to crunch: more than half (56.2 percent) of the wealth in BC is held by the richest 10 percent. The "bottom" 50 percent of the population share 3.1 percent of provincial wealth. Three percent is a long way from 56.2, never mind any notion of 50/50. Coast to coast, BC is the bottom of the barrel – approximately 2,250,000 people share only 3.1 percent of BC's wealth while about 450,000 divvy up more than half of what's owned in the province.

That's just one of the stats that stand out in Andrew MacLeod's recently published best-seller, *A Better Place on Earth: The Search for Fairness in Super Unequal British Columbia* (Harbour Publishing). Here are a few more facts: non-mortgage debt in BC in 2013 ($39,000) was the highest among Canada's provinces and territories. So is our child poverty – one in five children – that is increasing by more than 50,000 annually. Half of BC's kids who rely on single parents are impoverished. There is a stark contrast in median net worth – in 2012, it was a whopping $2,020,600 for the richest 10 percent and $10,700 for the poorest 10 percent, many of whom are deep in debt. Meanwhile, Vancouver, our largest and most expensive city, has the second lowest business taxes among 55, ranked just above Chennai, India. Consider that the numbers are from Stats Can and other reputable non-partisan sources.

Have you heard that BC has earned yet another top spot on a list? No, not most "liveable," "boring," "expensive" or "unhappy." Turns out the province is the most "unequal" in Canada.

The argument is over what we are going to do about this shameful reality. It's a far cry from our "Super Natural" moniker writ large about BC and the "Beautiful" we see on license plates along with the tired, delusional slogan mouthed by politicians in power, "The best place on Earth." This book brings it home that this tragedy and travesty, like climate change, is on our doorstep. We can and must do much better. The good news is we have many options.

The book began as a 10-part series by MacLeod on "Super Unequal BC" in *The Tyee*. As a father of two in a dual income family, he acknowledges his relatively privileged middle class upbringing and access to opportunity – he covers the legislature in Victoria online at *The Tyee* – and he describes himself as a journalist – a "reporter, not an activist" – who set out to assemble unarguable facts. But MacLeod not only spills the beans, he also counts them and lists dozens of ways to reconstitute them so more people here at home have enough to eat.

Journalist Stephen Hume describes the book as "a significant work of investigative journalism which deserves a wide audience… examining the growing income gap between the rich and the poor and contemplating the moral, ethical, social and political choices it creates." He notes that it "frames one of the most important discussions that will challenge British Columbians in the coming decades."

Laid-back praise alongside musician/activist Bif Naked who sings, "*A Better Place on Earth* lit me on fire and made me want to run in the streets, banging pots and pans, echoing the sentiments and words." The *Globe And Mail* put it in the company of former chief economist of the World Bank and Nobel Prize-winner, Joseph Stiglitz's *The Great Divide: Unequal Societies and What We Can Do About Them*. That review also quotes Plato's declaration that no man should be more than four times wealthier than the poorest member of society. Canada's current average CEO-to-worker pay ratio is 206:1.

"Since 1982, after-tax income for the top one percent of British Columbians has grown by 60 percent. For pretty much everyone else, the bottom 90 percent, that number has remained essentially flat," MacLeod notes.

As trickle-down economics is discredited and disrobed, "growing the economy" isn't stemming the inequality tsunami. That requires a revamped tax structure and social programs. But BC is the only province without an anti-poverty strategy.

Jimmy Pattison once opined, "Money is just a way of keeping score." He didn't mention – certainly not on his billboards – that the game is rigged and that in Russell Kelly's 1986 biography, *Pattison: Portrait of a Capitalist Superstar,* former cabinet minister Claude Richmond observed, "You can't live a week in BC without putting money in Jimmy's pocket."

The deliberate policy of the provincial and federal governments to cut higher and corporate taxes at all costs, while utilizing austerity measures to curtail myriad social programs and cook budgets, is obscene. Leonard Cohen wryly notes in his recently released *Never Gave Nobody Trouble,* "You got the right to all your riches/But you let it go too far."

There is, indeed, trouble in paradise. And we are in McLeod's debt – if we dare use the word – for exposing and enumerating the dark side of runaway growth. The stats will get much worse if we don't change course and governments. Among the gifts of *A Better Place on Earth* are do-able options listed in the final chapters. Government policy, which got us into this mess, can be reversed at the ballot box. And I, for one, won't vote for any candidate who hasn't read *The Search for Fairness in Super Unequal British Columbia.*

Bruce Mason is a Vancouver and Gabriola-Island based five-string banjo player, gardener, freelance writer and author of **Our Clinic**. brucemason@shaw.ca

*...**Co-ops** from p.23*

years of planning, the project is now well underway with 70% of both the commercial and residential units spoken for with completion scheduled for the summer of 2016.

Russell himself made the choice to settle in Nelson in 1987 even though it meant a lot of commuting back and forth to Vancouver during the Capers years. "I've always been a bit surprised how easily people get stuck in our large urban centres without really stepping back and looking at other options. Nelson has always been an epicentre of progressive activity – both political and cultural – as well as being located in one of the most beautiful corners of BC. We were looking for the best place to raise a family and have easy access to wilderness."

It is not surprising the Nelson Commons project would take root in a place like Nelson as a social enterprise. If co-ops and other social enterprises are to have a significant impact in shifting to a more benign form of commerce like MEC and Vancity, they will need to scale up and take a more prominent role in our economy.

Today, we hear a growing plethora of voices who recognize this trend could lead to the unravelling of civil society as we know it. Paradoxically, this great theft of wealth from the "commons," if left unchallenged, will pull the rug out from under the feet of the thieves themselves. The co-op model as the original social enterprise offers one antidote to an economy that has lost its moral compass.

Nelson Commons still has a good selection of two and three-bedroom units available. Scheduled completion is summer 2016. For more information, visit www.nelsoncommons.ca

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JUL 10-12
Introduction to Foot Reflexology commences Certificate Weekend Training Course. Friday Introduction 7:30PM, $10; Course $395 + GST. Pacific Institute of Reflexology (604) 875-8818, www.pacificreflexology.com

JUL 11 & 12
It's All About Ukulele Concert & Workshop: With world-renowned ukulele masters Kimo Hussey & Zanuck Lindsey from Hawaii. Concert Jul 11, 7PM, $20, Evergreen Cultural Centre, Studio Theatre, 1205 Pinetree Way, Coquitlam. Workshop Jul 12, 2-4PM, $20, Evergreen Cultural Centre, Rehearsal Hall. Tickets at http://wp.me/p4QvRR-dG

JUL 11 & JUL 26
Krishnamurti Vancouver Group @ Vancouver Public Library, Board Breakout Room, 350 W. Georgia St. 1:30-5PM. Free video showing & dialogue! www.meetup.com/Krishnamurti-Vancouver-Group

JUL 15
How Acupuncture and Chinese Medicine Work: Vancouver Public Library 350 W. Georgia St., Alma VanDusen and Peter Kaye Rooms with Shauna Mullinix, R.Ac., Qi Gong Practitioner, Instructor of ICTCMV, www.tcmcollege.com/info@tcmcollege.com

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AUG 16
Latin Summer Fest Vancouver: Free Admission, Cultural Family event, Trout Lake Park. Festival hotline : (604) 593-2448, www.latinsummerfest.com

AUG 19
How Western Medicine and Traditional Chinese Medicine Work in Harmony to Help Physical and Emotional Problems: with Kevin Lai, Doctor of Chiropractic (senior student of International College of Traditional Chinese Medicine), Vancouver Public Library, 350 W. Georgia St., Alma VanDusen and Peter Kaye Rooms. www.tcmcollege.com/info@tcmcollege.com

AUG 19-23
Women Healing with Horses 5-Day Transformational Journey: Yoga, soul inspiring wisdom through partnering with horses, creative arts, Shamanic journeys. www.womenhealingwithhorses.com, 604-807-2255.

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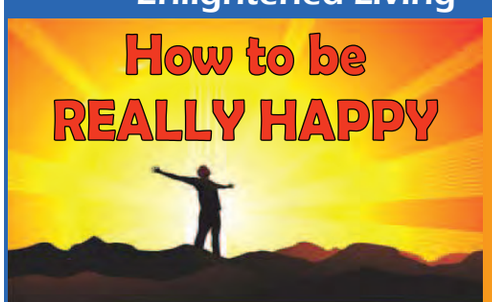

7:30 pm
Thurs. July 16 in Vancouver
Fri. July 17 in Richmond

Michael Grayson was initiated into the path of Inner Light and Sound in 1970 and sat at the feet of three of the greatest Spiritual Masters of this modern age. On a West Coast story-telling tour this summer, Michael will share what these Masters revealed to him about attaining true happiness.

Sponsored by Science of Spirituality
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Drop-ins are welcome

Sounds of hope and active community

One of the most interesting, promising quotes I've been unable to shake this year is from Leah and Chloe Smith, two 20-something sisters who front Rising Appalachia. "We are building community and tackling social injustice through melody – making the stage reach out with octopus arms to gather a great family."

Blending and brandishing the power of pure harmony in an eclectic mix of hip hop, soul, world-infused folk and more, they're sharing the message of the urgent need for massive change. Their mission, as they note, is "to help the environment, change the 'maldistribution' of wealth and to simply make the world better."

Rising Appalachia has toured Europe, the Caribbean, Central America, the Indian subcontinent and the US while fiercely maintaining their autonomy and independence; they create, self-manage, record, produce and direct their own work.

Rising Appalachia touches down at the Vancouver Folk Music Festival (July 17-19) and at Atmosphere Gathering in Cumberland in the Comox Valley on Vancouver Island (August 14-16). See www.atmospheregathering.com

It isn't likely Rising Appalachia will want to leave Cumberland, the epitome of their kind of place, given the folks who have chosen gather there. It's a funky, growing village of assorted good ol' boys, creative entrepreneurs, herbalists, mountain bikers and young families. Like many of the village's residents, Rising Appalachia was raised on local folk, rock and timeless lullabies, nurtured and inspired by travel and ideas – now blossoming and bearing fruit – in the international community.

Also in the lineup – handpicked to create an "exciting, multi-sensory extravaganza" –are Nahko and Medicine for the People, David Starfire, the Fort Knox Five, Kaminanda, Plantrae and Humans, alongside an impressive roster of last year's favourites.

"The lineup reflects our commitment to nurturing local talent alongside the presentation of world-class acts," says Vig Schulman of Cumberland Village Works, which is putting on the event with Little Island Productions. "We'll be creating an incredibly unique and vibrant energy." Other diverse, family-friendly attractions include local organic food, yoga, workshops, camping and a nearby glacier-fed lake.

Sound good? Well, yet another festival that caught our attention is the aptly named Blessed Coast Ceremonial Celebration in Squamish, BC (August 21 -24). This event features three days of live music, again mixed with local organic food, yoga, workshops and camping. Organizers say the event is "born from a seed of intention to nurture the emergent culture of our evolving community ecosystem [and to] showcase local art, teachings, talent, food and goods to deepen our relationship to the land, working with indigenous elders and wisdom-keepers to co-create a ceremonial space for human evolution."

Also offered is a full schedule of yoga and workshops with a local focus, an optional locally-sourced, organic meal plan, an Open-Source Marketplace and a team of facilitators to lead children through an optional co-creative journey over the length of the festival. Visit www.blessedcoast.ca

Our Earth and her inhabitants are at a tipping point and a turning point. We invite you to witness, celebrate and participate in the events showcased in this article. We'll have more next month.

Leah and Chloe Smith from Rising Appalachia. Look for them at the Vancouver Folk Music Festival and at Atmosphere Gathering in Cumberland, BC.

ATMOSPHERE
GATHERING
NAHKO AND MEDICINE FOR THE PEOPLE
DAVID STARFIRE, FORT KNOX FIVE
RISING APPALACHIA, NICKODEMUS
NATTALI RIZE & NOTIS
FIVE ALARM FUNK, HUMANS
ADHAM SHAIKH, KAMINANDA
LUCITERRA, PLANTRAE, BASS PHYSICS
MAT THE ALIEN, THE LIBRARIAN, ERICA DEE
NEON STEVE, PIGEON HOLE, VESPERS
THE TAILOR, MAX ULIS, MICHAEL FRASER
REVEREND HEATHEN STRANGEFELLOW
& THE VAUDEVILLE VAGABONDS
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Democracy in Canada
some modest proposals

by Don Davies

Don Davies is the Member of Parliament for Vancouver Kingsway. He was first elected in 2008 and was re-elected in 2011.

Like few others, the last decade in Canadian politics has exposed serious deficiencies in Canadian democracy.

Parliament was prorogued by a Prime Minister afraid of losing a confidence vote in the House of Commons.

An unelected Senate has generated scores of scandals, ranging from allegations of bribery, to fraud, to reports doctored on orders from the PMO. MPs have lost their seats because of electoral cheating and parties have been found guilty of serious violations of the *Elections Act*.

Government backbenchers have been muzzled, communications have been centralized and Canadian policy has been driven by a Prime Minister wholly uninterested in compromise, or even hearing a diversity of views.

That Canadian democracy is under challenge is a point acknowledged on all sides of Parliament.

MPs from several caucuses have left their parties to sit as independents. Conservative backbenchers have publicly defied their Prime Minister to raise issues he has expressly forbidden and one, Michael Chong, has proposed legislation that, at least, tries to loosen the strict rule imposed upon them.

Having served as MP for Vancouver Kingsway for the last seven years, I have identified three initiatives I think would go some distance in making Parliament more democratic for its members and more accountable to the citizens we are elected to represent.

Government backbenchers have been muzzled, communications have been centralized and Canadian policy has been driven by a Prime Minister wholly uninterested in compromise, or even hearing a diversity of views.

First, I believe we must loosen the anachronistic grip of confidence when it comes to government legislation and the consequences of a lost vote. By doing so, we can hold more free votes, which I fervently believe most Canadians want. At the same time, we can increase the influence of individual MPs and spur more consultation about legislation.

At present, our system runs by a centuries-old convention that says a government must fall, and an election called, if a government loses a vote on a money bill or an explicit matter of confidence. This results in "whipped" votes where every member of the government must vote for a government bill, no matter how odious they find it or how opposed their constituents may be to it. This, in turn, engenders a similar reaction in opposition parties, who, for their part, are whipped into opposing the government legislation. Through continuous, unexamined repetition, whipped votes are now the norm and are applied to many other issues that involve neither money nor confidence.

To fix this, I propose we amend our system to permit free votes on all bills, government or not, except for on an explicit vote of confidence itself. If a regular bill is defeated, it is just that; it is defeated and does not lead to the unnecessary and expensive step of an election to resolve the impasse. This would simply send a message to the government that its bill does not enjoy the support of the majority of the House and it must consult those who disagree and amend it sufficiently to garner the support it needs to pass.

I believe most Canadians want their elected representatives to feel freer to vote according to their commitments, consciences and electorates' wishes – and not by the dictates of their Party's whips. At the same time, we can preserve the option of defeating a government on an explicit motion to do so.

Second, I suggest the power to prorogue Parliament be taken away from the Prime Minister and instead require the agreement of a majority of MPs in the House of Commons.

In a modern democracy, it is frankly preposterous that the power to determine if a nation's Parliament sits – or not – is held at the whim of one person. Indeed, it is not an overstatement to say such a power wielded by one person is more typical of a dictatorship than a representative system of government.

If there is a good reason to prorogue Parliament, than let the Prime Minister make that case to the House of Commons and obtain the consent of a majority of the members. Certainly, if such a system had been in place in 2008, Prime Minister Harper would not have been able to avoid facing the House of Commons with members who were prepared to vote a lack of confidence in his government and replace it with a coalition that enjoyed the support of a majority of MPs.

Finally, I believe that we must make fixed election dates an ironclad reality in Canada. Even though we *technically* have fixed election dates (namely, the October in the fourth year following the year of an election), the legislation contains a loophole that effectively allows a Prime Minister to call an election whenever he or she feels like it.

That is exactly what Prime Minister Harper did in 2008 when he called a snap election for October of that year even though it was not scheduled until 2010. Speculation was also rampant this year that Mr. Harper might call a spring election in another attempt to catch other parties off guard.

It is patently unfair for one party – the governing one, at that, who has so many institutional advantages – to be able to manipulate the timing of an election and become prepared for it in advance of the other parties. It is like one runner in the race being able to fire off the starter's pistol and it skews the level playing field a democracy is supposed to ensure.

Many other initiatives are necessary to improve the health of Canadian democracy.

We should abolish unelected Senate, implement proportional representation and make floor-crossing MPs accountable to their electorates. We need to implement creative solutions to get more women, youth and minorities elected so our legislative bodies reflect the actual realities of our society. We must find ways to share power more effectively and better ensure that varying perspectives can make their way into the legislative process.

In the meantime, however, the above-mentioned three initiatives can be implemented swiftly and without excessive disagreement.

Democracy is supposed to be a living, breathing concept. It should be constantly examined and unceasingly improved.

Let's get started.

www.dondavies.ca

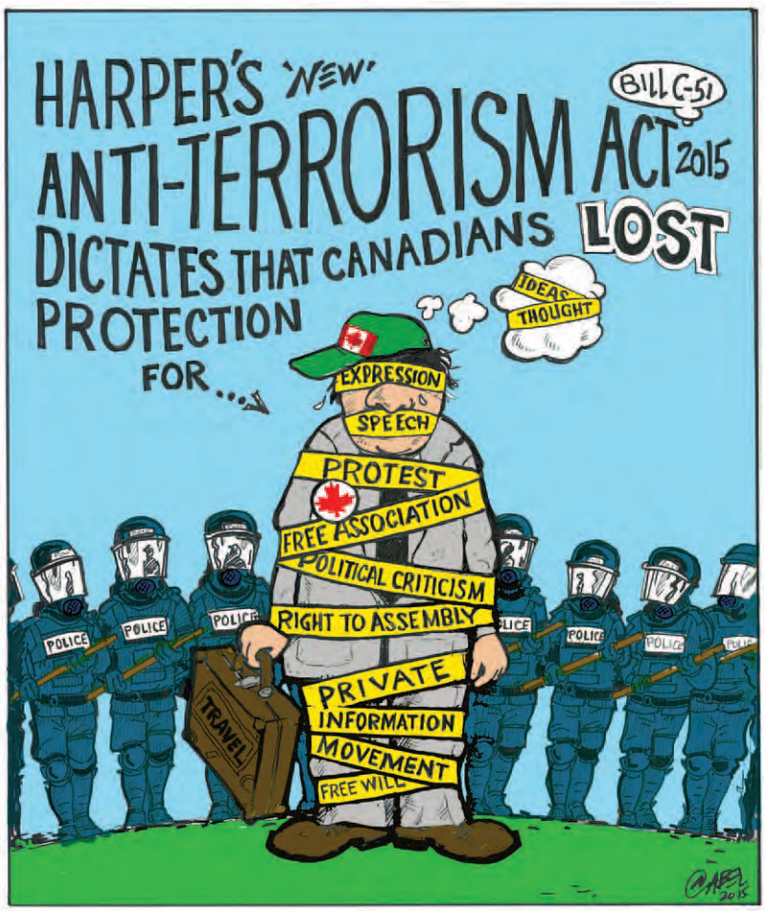
by Anthony James Hall

Canada's wrong turn on terrorism

The ascent of the Canadian police state through the passage of Bill C-51 has raised the stakes in the coming federal election. The vote is shaping up as a kind of referendum on whether or not Canadians will grant free reign to Harper's open-ended crusade against anticipated "terrorism." Many Canadians are realizing that, if we continue down the treacherous path charted by C-51, we shall certainly descend into a Dark Ages of Canadian fascism.

Star constitutional lawyer Rocco Galati has emphasized this danger. Recently, he charged that Bill C-51 replicates the legislative enablers of fascism ushered into law in Germany and Italy in the 1930s. He warns this new law will make Canada's security police, CSIS, a "modern-day Gestapo," unhinged from any significant oversight or democratic accountability.

Those overtly or covertly ensnared in C-51's expanded web of police powers will lose all protections under the Charter of Rights and Freedoms. Canadians will forfeit yet more rights of personal privacy together with our liberties of expression, thought, association, assembly and movement. Similarly, the offending law subordinates the protections of the existing criminal justice system to the claimed imperatives of anti-terrorism. No longer can Canadians rely on the protections entrenched in the principle that citizens are innocent until proven guilty through due process in a court of law.



The words, "terrorist," "terrorism" and "act of terror" have, for a long time, been purposely paired with especially horrific imagery engineered in the mainstream media to evoke trauma and repulsion. We are never given a credible explanation, however, of where and how criminal activity became the stuff of something bigger and worse. The very name "Global War on Terror" encapsulates the core deception of our time. The quintessence of terror is war. It makes no sense to subdue terror by fighting it with wars.

In this post-Cold War era, the dominant empire's war on communism was replaced by the war on terrorism, with the Islamic world now cast as the demonized "enemies of the West." The concept of terrorism is thus spun and sold to us in ways that distort and misrepresent the truth of what is really going on in the most intense psychological operation of our time. As a result, the vocabulary of terrorism is much too subjective, torqued and propagandistic to form a reliable basis for permanent institutions and viable laws.

The subordination of our criminal law beneath the growing edifice of "terrorist law" is a stealthy process integral to creeping fascism. If we pull back the curtain of deception, we see the imagery of terrorism has been contrived to advance a number of interests and agendas essential to maintaining the permanent war economy. The political economy of war puts lethal darkness at the heart of our corporate culture. How much longer can we survive our dependency on an unsustainable life support system that feeds on death and destruction of our natural world?

> The evidence continues to expose our governments as the primary sources and enablers of the very dangers we entrust them to protect us against.

It is especially instructive that those who have taken the lead in rebranding the seemingly endless Global War on Terror are the architects and political overlords of the most terrifying intertwining of military, police, banking and media power ever orchestrated in world history. We are now experiencing the realization of the very dangers identified by former US President Eisenhower in 1961 when he warned us to beware of the military-industrial complex.

Is Canada protected from police state tyranny?

Although Bill C-51 has already been passed into law as the Anti-Terrorism Act 2015, the political status of Harper's initiative still rides on the outcome of the next federal election. As the non-partisan constitutional expert Rocco Galati has emphasized, any parliamentarian or candidate of a political party that voted for this fascist legislation does not deserve a Canadian citizen's vote. Since Justin Trudeau and all his MPS voted to pass Bill C-51, the implication of Galati's advice is that the Liberals disqualified themselves as serious contenders to replace the Harper government.

No matter the outcome of the next federal election, however, the harsh reality is Canadians are already experiencing the police state tyranny Harper has now formalized with his anti-terrorist enactment. The passage of Bill C-51 now codifies and amplifies existing patterns that have long been allowed to erode protections for the human rights of Canadians. Beginning especially in the 1980s, the protections we once expected from governments have been steadily drained away through the process of "deregulation." In strategic areas like banking, stock markets, security, public health, pharmaceuticals, food safety and the environment, corporate leviathans became self-regulating like the fox guarding the henhouse.

Here in Alberta, for instance, the current regulator of the oil and gas sector is 100% financed and directed by the industry itself. Likewise, such conflict of interest has become the rule rather than the exception in the field of public health. A former employee of Health Canada, Shiv Chopra has emerged as one of Canada's most compelling eyewitnesses to the sacrifice of the public interest and common good. In his book, *Corrupt to the Core*, Chopra details the steady subordination of his former federal employer to transnational companies whose products are subject to federal approval.

In Neil Young's new album, *The Monsanto Years*, words and music are put to many of the current assaults to the planet that go far beyond Monsanto's flooding of our farmlands with cancer-causing glyphosate euphemistically labelled *Roundup*. The mounting evidence of the weaponization of our food, air and water puts the onus on all of us to do our own research, testing and regulation to do the best we can to protect ourselves from exposure to toxic hazards.

Indeed, the evidence continues to expose our governments as the primary sources and enablers of the very

dangers we entrust them to protect us against. The poisoning of our biological, mental and political environment to fuel the war economy is especially insidious in the seemingly endless Global War on Terror.

Who are the real terrorists?

As Canadians, we are encouraged to believe we are among the most free, democratic and protected citizens on Earth. We pride ourselves on our input into an impressive array of international treaties, covenants and declarations designed to protect the most basic human rights. The shocking truth, however, is that these international legal instruments are rarely implemented or enforced. This failure of enforcement conceals the erroneous perception that universal human rights are especially well protected here.

The freedoms our Western societies are supposed to epitomize, but do not, are then presented back to us as the alleged basis of "Islamic contempt." The notion of Islamic "hatred of our freedoms" was deliberately channelled into a psychological campaign to incite and exploit religious antagonisms. This strategy put a new face on the enemy that was necessary to perpetuate the war economy. The imagery of a Western call to arms in this anti-Muslim crusade is invoked by the repeated use of words like "jihad," "infidels," "radicalization" and "terrorism." The term "lone-wolf terrorist" illustrates how the masterminds of this propaganda deploy words and imagery that play on our most deep-seated childhood fears.

In Canada, Harper's new Anti-Terrorism Act creates the impression Canadians are receiving added protections from the "Islamic menace" and from other possible threats to our "national security." The deeper reality is this fascist legislation formalizes the stripping away of our most basic protections that have emerged from centuries of hard-won democratic evolution.

The international system of justice is not entirely moribund. On rare occasions, international criminal law is implemented in UN courts to bring war criminals to justice. Consistently, however, the criminal proceedings are directed at those on the losing side of conflict. Never are the war criminals on the winning side brought to justice. They are protected members of a ruling cabal that puts itself above the law. Its great wealth and power without accountability locates these reckless racketeers at ground zero of the most ruthless and dangerous forms of terror the world has ever known.

Anthony Hall is professor of Globalization Studies at the University of Lethbridge. He has written for the **Globe and Mail**, the **Toronto Star**, **Canadian Dimension** and many other periodicals. His most recent books are **Earth Into Property: Colonization, Decolonization and Capitalism** and **The American Empire and the Fourth World**.

*...**War** from p.5*

of Jugoslavia [Yugoslavia] complicated matters. Jugoslavia and Hungary, long bitter enemies, were almost at each other's throats. Italy was ready to jump in. But France was waiting. So was Czechoslovakia. All of them are looking ahead to war. Not the people – not those who fight and pay and die – only those who foment wars and remain safely at home to profit.

There are 40,000,000 men under arms in the world today and our statesmen and diplomats have the temerity to say that war is not in the making. Hell's bells! Are these 40,000,000 men being trained to be dancers? Not in Italy, to be sure. Premier Mussolini knows what they are being trained for.

He, at least, is frank enough to speak out. Only the other day, Il Duce in *International Conciliation*, the publication of the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, said:

"And above all, Fascism, the more it considers and observes the future and the development of humanity quite apart from political considerations of the moment, believes neither in the possibility nor the utility of perpetual peace… War alone brings up to its highest tension all human energy and puts the stamp of nobility upon the people who have the courage to meet it."

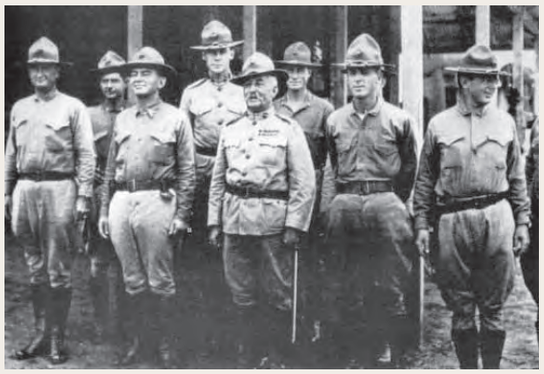
Undoubtedly, Mussolini means exactly what he says. His well-trained army, his great fleet of planes and even his navy are ready for war – anxious for it, apparently. His recent stand at the side of Hungary in the latter's dispute with Jugoslavia showed that. And the hurried mobilization of his troops on the Austrian border after the assassination of Dollfuss showed it too. There are others in Europe, too,

> For a great many years, as a soldier, I had a suspicion that war was a racket; not until I retired to civil life did I fully realize it. Now that I see the international war clouds gathering, as they are today, I must face it and speak out.

whose sabre rattling presages war, sooner or later.

Herr Hitler, with his re-arming Germany and his constant demands for more and more arms, is an equal if not greater menace to peace. France only recently increased the term of military service for its youth from a year to 18 months. Yes, all over, nations are camping in their arms. The mad dogs of Europe are on the loose. In the Orient, the maneuvering is more adroit. Back in 1904, when Russia and Japan fought, we kicked out our old friends the Russians and backed Japan. Then, our very generous international bankers were financing Japan. Now, the trend is to poison us against the Japanese. What does the "open door" policy to China mean to us? Our trade with China is about $90,000,000 a year. Or the Philippine Islands? We have spent about $600,000,000 in the Philippines in 35 years and we (our bankers and industrialists and speculators) have private investments there of less than $200,000,000.

Then, to save that China trade of about $90,000,000, or to protect these private investments of less than $200,000,000 in the Philippines, we would be all stirred up to hate Japan and go to war – a war that might well cost us tens of billions of dollars, hundreds of thousands of lives of Americans, and many more hundreds of thousands of physically maimed and mentally unbalanced men.



Marine Officers at Veracruz. Front row, left to right: Wendell C. Neville; John A. Lejeune; Littleton W.T. Waller, Commanding; Smedley Butler

Of course, for this loss, there would be a compensating profit – fortunes would be made. Millions and billions of dollars would be piled up. By a few. Munitions makers. Bankers. Ship builders. Manufacturers. Meat packers. Speculators. They would fare well.

Yes, they are getting ready for another war. Why shouldn't they? It pays high dividends.

But what does it profit the men who are killed? What does it profit their mothers and sisters, their wives and their sweethearts? What does it profit their children? What does it profit anyone except the very few to whom war means huge profits?

Yes, and what does it profit the nation?

Take our own case. Until 1898, we didn't own a bit of territory outside the mainland of North America. At that time, our national debt was a little more than $1,000,000,000. Then we became "internationally minded." We forgot, or shunted aside, the advice of the Father of our country. We forgot George Washington's warning about "entangling alliances." We went to war. We acquired outside territory. At the end of the World War period, as a direct result of our fiddling in international affairs, our national debt had jumped to over $25,000,000,000. Our total favourable trade balance during the 25-year period was about $24,000,000,000. Therefore, on a purely bookkeeping basis, we ran a little behind year for year and that foreign trade might well have been ours without the wars.

It would have been far cheaper (not to say safer) for the average American who pays the bills to stay out of foreign entanglements. For a very few, this racket, like bootlegging and other underworld rackets, brings fancy profits, but the cost of operations is always transferred to the people – who do not profit.

Excerpted from **War Is a Racket,** by United States Marine Corps Major General and two-time Medal of Honor recipient **Smedley D. Butler.**

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Laid out over the course of four evenings, the mission of this forum is to create thoughtful dialogue between members of the surrounding community, stimulated by respected educators, policy makers, investment advisors and those whose ancestors have lived here from time immemorial.